

9/10/58

Dear Sir,

I have made contact with braceros at the Martinez camp and on a small country road outside a Danenburg camp on the outskirts of El Centro.

Mr. Martinez was very friendly about the whole thing. He remembered me from the last time I was there. He said I was welcome to the camp anytime. I found that the best time to visit the camp will be in the evenings between 6 and 8. The men get thru work about 5 P.M. and bathe and eat supper about 6. I was at the camp about 7:30 and walked thru the barracks asking the men when it would be more convenient for me to visit them. They go to bed about 8 P.M..

While walking thru the barracks I noticed that the beds have been changed for better ones. Also that there are now twice as many men in each barrack, since the beds are double. (Bunk type)

As I mentioned before, the beds are better and also the barracks are well ventilated, but for some reason many of the men insist on sleeping on the floor.

I managed to get an interview outside the Danenburg camp, but I do not think that is a good place to interview, since the men are suspicious of any stranger that approaches them in the street ~~or~~ afraid that they will be gyped for something. They feel more at ease when they are interviewed in the barracks among their Paisanos. I guess they feel this way because they know that anybody that will gyp braceros is not allowed in camp. I learned this from experience at the Martinez camp. Tomorrow I will visit the office of the Danenburg camp and try to get permission to interview inside the camp. There are several "No Admittance" signs, for visitors around the camp.

I had a talk with my friend that hauls braceros around the valley. I am afraid that there is no chance to interview braceros with him, since they are working in the Northern part of the Valley. He did say that he will let me know whenever they are in this area.

In my talk with my friend he told me that he drives a semi-truck and loads any where from 60 to 100 men in it. The men are now picking cotton at 10¢ a lb. The men only work half a day and then are returned to camp.

My friend also told me that some of the trucks used to haul braceros are unsafe. The Highway Patrol has been cracking down on them because of faulty brakes and no stop lights, and on some not even rear lights. Also the majority of the drivers do not have chauffeur's license including himself. He has tried twice to get his license but has on both occasions failed. A

friend of his has already been fined 50 dollars for not having a license, but this does not scare them because the fine is reduced to 9 dollars if they get one. Another thing is that they keep to back roads until they know that the way is clear. As you already might know, here in the Valley there are thousands of back roads.

Best Regards to all,

Louie M. Tagaban
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P.S.

Could you please check and see what is holding my check up. I always receive it between the 6th and 8th, but now no check.